



*March 2026*

# MONTHLY REPORT







The word 'paréa' in Greek means “company, circle of friends”: **everyone is welcome in Paréa!** Located within walking distance from the CCAC (*Closed and Controlled Access Camp*) on Lesvos, our community center **Paréa Lesvos** offers a safe space where people on the move, locals and internationals can meet and spend time in a peaceful and welcoming environment.

Paréa is run by **Europe Cares** responsible for the safety, major facility costs, maintenance and development of the center. It is also a **home** to another 8 **civil society organisations**: **Artists Giving Back, Collective Aid, Makerspace Lesvos, Médecins Sans Frontières Brussels, Refocus Media Labs, Refugee Relief Doro Blancke, TerraPsy, Yoga and Sport with Refugees**. In a time of high political uncertainty and constant withdrawal of support and international attention from Lesvos, our network of partner organisations joined forces to offer people on the move a **wide range of services** including food and NFI distributions, medical, legal and psychosocial support, education and social care activities. But first and foremost, we offer a **sense of community and belonging**.

We are **one community in solidarity**. *Will you join us?*



## Number of arrivals March



## Population in the CCAC



# Lesvos Updates

In March, Lesvos recorded 58 new arrivals. Despite this, the number of people living in the Lesvos Closed Controlled Access Center (CCAC) has decreased. By the end of February, 802 people\* were recorded in the camp by the Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum. During the same period, there have been 70 transfers from Lesvos to the mainland.

The Aegean continued to see arrivals despite the **increasingly dangerous conditions** people face attempting the crossing. Across Greece, border areas remain **heavily monitored** as the Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum deepens its **cooperation with US agencies to accelerate the forced return** of people whose asylum claims have been rejected. Greek migration policy has reoriented accordingly, now mirroring the punitive enforcement approach that has drawn widespread criticism in the United States.

At the European level, new migration policies are moving in the same direction. On March 26th, the European Parliament approved the so-called "return regulation" by 389 votes to 206, with 32 abstentions. The law **enables EU member states to deport asylum seekers to third countries** with which they hold bilateral agreements, **regardless of whether those countries have any connection to a person's country of origin**. It extends the **maximum detention period to 24 months** and imposes effectively unlimited re-entry bans on returned individuals. Critically, the approved text opens the door to cooperation with non-recognised third-country entities, including, according to Green MEP Melissa Camara, **the Taliban**, for the purposes of returning Afghan nationals. **Families with children are explicitly included in the scope of deportations under this law**. The legislation now moves to final negotiations between Parliament and member states, where no significant opposition is expected.

2026 has already been described by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) as **the deadliest start to a year in the Mediterranean since the organisation began recording deaths and disappearances in 2014**. At least **683 people have died** or gone missing since January, **more than double the figure recorded during the same period in 2025**. With rescue operations curtailed, NGO vessels detained, and people pushed onto longer and more dangerous routes, the death toll has surged even as crossing numbers have held roughly steady. Just this past weekend, **71 people were lost at sea near Lampedusa**. On April 1st alone, 19 bodies were recovered, and **Sea-Watch estimated that at least 104 people died within the span of just three days**. Off the Greek coast, 22 more people lost their lives after spending six days at sea. Frontex describes these losses as the result of extreme weather. NGOs and human rights observers point instead to deliberate policies that obstruct search and rescue and block legal pathways to safety.

As EU institutions and national governments accelerate enforcement measures (deportation hubs, longer detention, cooperation with authoritarian regimes) the human cost mounts. Criminalising rescue, detaining people fleeing war and persecution, and outsourcing border enforcement to states unaccountable to international human rights law have a demonstrable outcome: **more people die**. The right to seek asylum is enshrined in international law and must be protected. States carry a legal obligation to rescue people in distress at sea, one that no political calculation can override. Expanding safe and legal pathways is the only mechanism available to prevent the Mediterranean from becoming, in the words of IOM Director General Amy Pope, **a graveyard**.

\*<https://migration.gov.gr/en/statistika/>

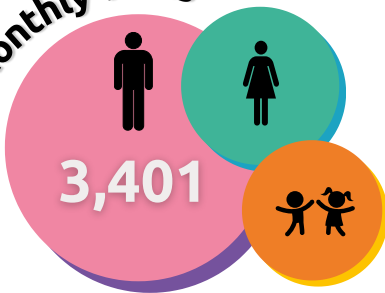
Sources: Reuters (28 March 2026); Euronews (26 March 2026); Ekathimerini (March 2026); IOM Missing Migrants Project; Sea-Watch.





# March in numbers

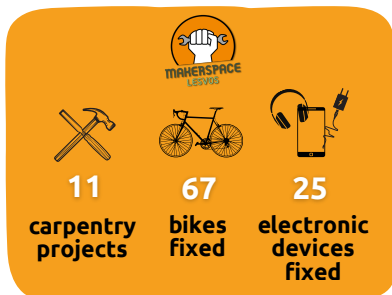
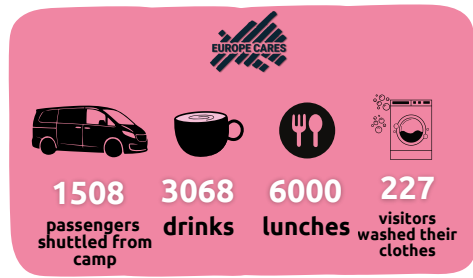
Monthly visits



Average daily visitors



## Basic Needs



## Social Activities



## Support Sessions







## Highlight of the month

Parea rounded off March with an **incredibly successful cooking workshop** at the Parea club. On March 31st, roughly **50 visitors** worked **alongside** our **volunteers** to create the universally beloved and undeniably tasty dish - **falafel wraps**! Luckily, **many of our visitors were chefs from across the world**, so we were in very good hands making the bread, falafel, salad and fries all from scratch. With many tasks to complete, there was something for everyone to do, no matter their level of cooking experience.

After many hours of **preparation with men, women, and children** all joining to help, the falafel wraps were ready to enjoy. Thanks to the **amazing dedication and teamwork** of our visitors and volunteers, we managed to **serve over 80 delicious falafel wraps in our main hall**.

We ended our afternoon in classic Parea fashion, **dancing together, eating together, and sharing in the joy of our wonderful community**.



## Faces of Paréa

“ I am married and I have a family. When I come to Paréa I feel happy, I feel like it’s a home. I love it so much that I wish it was open everyday, also on Saturday and Sunday. The volunteers here treat me well, I feel like I am with my family. Here, I don’t feel like I am away from my home. People are always nice, they are so welcoming and welcome everybody with a smile.

I love all of Paréa: I love joining people playing with the playstation, playing basketball outside, going to the café, dancing with the others... I am thankful for this place and for the people. I wish for this place to keep running, doing the same thing and help more people. ”



Abbas from Sudan





# In the Spotlight

*Meet our partner*

## Yoga and Sport with Refugees



Yoga and Sport with Refugees (YSR) is one of our partners that **offers various sports activities** at their Gym, in Paréa, and across the island of Lesvos. Their mission is to **build a happier and healthier community** through the **power of sport and solidarity**. They do this in many ways, one for example is by implementing programs such as their **coaching initiative for People on the Move** who wish to pursue a career in sports.

At Paréa Lesvos, YSR run **volleyball tournaments and basketball trainings** where our visitors can strengthen their **physical and mental wellbeing**, release their emotions and discover new talents. In March, YSR paid tribute to **Women' Month by collaborating with Paréa's Women's Day Celebration**, and putting on one of their lively Volleyball Tournaments and offered Boxing coaching to all those who joined.

## *Welcome to our space: Music Corner in Paréa Club*

**Paréa Club** is a lively and versatile space where our visitors can freely express their **creativity**. From art and crafts, bracelet making to board games, Sports Day and our new French Café, there is always something happening and an occasion to **learn from each other!**

This month, **music** brought the space alive as our **guitar lessons** were particularly popular! Whether indoors in a cosy and colorful space or outside in the sunshine, everyone had the opportunity to explore new instruments or to share with others their passion.

All of Paréa resonated with the rhythmic beats of the **drums**, the melodies of the **flute** and the warm strumming of **guitars!**







Would you like to join our community?  
Contact us at [contact@europecares.org](mailto:contact@europecares.org)



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